

Message Text

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TAGS:PARM, SOPN

SUBJECT: MARCH 20 ROUNDUP: PRESS ITEMS OF ARMS CONTROL
INTEREST

LONDON FOR AMB/EX

1. BOTH NEW YORK TIMES AND WASHINGTON POST REPORTED THAT
U.S. HAS ASKED USSR TO OPEN NEGOTIATIONS IN APRIL ON BANNING
ANTISATELLITE WEAPONS, BUT PAPERS OFFERED DIFFERING VIEWS
OF PENTAGON ATTITUDE. RICHARD BURT REPORTED IN MARCH 19
TIMES THAT U.S. PROPOSED NEGOTIATIONS "DESPITE STRONG
RESERVATIONS IN DEFENSE DEPARTMENT OVER STARTING SUCH TALKS
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NOW. PENTAGON IS UNHAPPY ABOUT WHITE HOUSE DECISION
BECAUSE AT PRESENT, ONLY SOVIET UNION CAN REACH ORBITING
SATELLITES AND DESTROY THEM. GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS SAID
THAT PROPOSAL WAS ONLY RECENTLY RELAYED TO MOSCOW AND THAT
NO FORMAL REPLY HAD BEEN RECEIVED. BUT MOSCOW IS EXPECTED
TO AGREE AND AMERICAN OFFICIALS SAID IT WAS LIKELY THAT
TALKS WOULD BEGIN IN APRIL WITH PAUL C. WARNKE, DIRECTOR
OF ACDA, HEADING AN AMERICAN DELEGATION. ADMINISTRATION'S
PROPOSAL COMES AS OTHER SOVIET-AMERICAN EFFORTS AT ARMS
CONTROL, SUCH AS TALKS ON STRATEGIC ARMS LIMITATION, ARE

SHOWING FEW SIGNS OF PROGRESS AND CARTER ADMINISTRATION IS EXPRESSING CONCERN OVER EXPANSION OF MOSCOW'S MILITARY POWER. HOWEVER, OFFICIALS HOPE JOINT UNDERSTANDING CAN BE REACHED ON SPACE BEFORE IT BECOMES AN ARENA FOR ALL-OUT MILITARY COMPETITION. PREVENTING AN ARMS RACE IN SPACE HAS BECOME AN IMPORTANT GOAL OF CARTER ADMINISTRATION BECAUSE OF GROWING AMERICAN RELIANCE ON SATELLITES FOR CIVILIAN AND MILITARY TASKS, SUCH AS MONITORING COMPLIANCE WITH ARMS CONTROL AGREEMENTS, AND PROVIDING EARLY WARNING IN EVENT OF MISSILE ATTACK. OFFICIALS FEAR THAT SOVIET DEVELOPMENT OF HUNTER-KILLER SATELLITE SYSTEM THREATENS USE OF SATELLITES IN THESE ROLES.... IN RECENT MONTHS, PENTAGON HAS OPPOSED OPENING TALKS BEFORE U.S. DEVELOPS COMPARABLE WEAPON OF ITS OWN. DESPITE THIS, WHITE HOUSE IS SAID TO HAVE ACCEDED TO ARGUMENTS OF STATE DEPARTMENT AND ARMS CONTROL AGENCY THAT TALKS SHOULD BEGIN WITHOUT DELAY. ONE IMPORTANT FACTOR IN DECISION, OFFICIALS SAID, IS NEW INTELLIGENCE SUGGESTING THAT MOSCOW IS DEVELOPING ANOTHER GENERATION OF ANTISATELLITE WEAPONS. OF PARTICULAR CONCERN IS POSSIBILITY THAT IN 1980S, SOVIET UNION COULD USE GROUND-BASED LASERS TO SHOOT SATELLITES OUT OF SKY.... PENTAGON HAS ALSO BEGUN TO DEVELOP TWO KINDS OF HUNTER-KILLER SATELLITES.... OFFICIALS HOPE THAT THREAT POSED BY UNCLASSIFIED

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THESE TWO PROJECTS WILL INDUCE MOSCOW TO AGREE TO BAN SUCH WEAPONS. ADMINISTRATION HAS NOT

DECIDED EXACTLY WHAT SUCH AN AGREEMENT SHOULD PROHIBIT. OFFICIALS ACKNOWLEDGE THAT SIMPLE BAN ON DEPLOYMENT OF HUNTER-KILLER SATELLITES WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT TO VERIFY AND THAT ANY SPACE AGREEMENT SHOULD ALSO CURB DEVELOPMENT OF SUCH SYSTEMS. BUT PENTAGON OPPOSES BAN ON DEVELOPMENT, CONTENDING THAT THIS WOULD INTERFERE WITH ITS TWO ANTISATELLITE PROJECTS, THUS REDUCING AMERICAN BARGAINING LEVERAGE IN NEGOTIATIONS. ACCORDINGLY, ALTHOUGH NO FIRM DECISION HAS BEEN MADE, OFFICIALS ARE LEANING TOWARD ASKING MOSCOW TO STOP TESTING ANTISATELLITE SYSTEMS WHILE TALKS GET UNDER WAY. WHITE HOUSE OFFICIAL SAID PROSPECT OF MOSCOW AGREEING TO STOP TESTS WERE SLIM, BUT HE ARGUED THAT IN LONG RUN, SOVIET UNION HAD STRONG INTEREST IN AVOIDING ALL-OUT MILITARY COMPETITION IN SPACE. 'I DON'T THINK SOVIETS WANT TO FORCE US INTO ANTISATELLITE BUSINESS,' HE SAID, 'BECAUSE WITH PROGRAMS WE HAVE UNDER WAY, WE COULD CLEAN UP SKY IN 24 HOURS.'

2. IN HIS MARCH 20 WASHINGTON POST ARTICLE ON ANTISATELLITE TALKS, GEORGE WILSON SAID ALTHOUGH STATE DEPARTMENT "DID NOT DISCLOSE HOW REQUEST WAS MADE, NOR WHEN, ADMINISTRATION SOURCES SAID YESTERDAY IT WAS MADE LAST MONTH TO SOVIET OFFICIALS IN WASHINGTON. U.S. OFFICIALS SUGGESTED THAT FIRST MEETING BE HELD SOMETIME IN APRIL, SOURCES SAID.

SOVIET UNION HAS NOT YET REPLIED TO REQUEST, ACCORDING TO
ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS. DEFENSE SECRETARY, HAROLD BROWN,

ADMINISTRATION SOURCES SAID, FELT THAT MEETING NEXT MONTH
WOULDN'T ALLOW ENOUGH TIME TO COORDINATE U.S. GOVERNMENT'S
EFFORT AND UNSUCCESSFULLY ARGUED FOR LATER DATE. BROWN,
SOURCES STRESSED, WELCOMES NEGOTIATIONS TO BAN HOSTILE
SPACE ACTIVITIES, AND DID NOT ARGUE FOR WAITING UNTIL U.S.
HAD SUCH WEAPONS IN HAND. SOVIET UNION HAS SATELLITE
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KILLER SYSTEM WHILE U.S. IS STILL DEVELOPING ONE. SOVIET
ANTISATELLITE SYSTEM REQUIRES THAT KILLER SATELLITE TRACK
AND INTERCEPT ENEMY SATELLITE AND THEN EXPLODE NEAR IT.
U.S. IS WORKING ON SEVERAL FASTER-REACTING SYSTEMS....
PRESIDENT CARTER AND DEFENSE SECRETARY BROWN HAVE SAID
THAT U.S. IS HOPEFUL OF NEGOTIATING LIMITATION ON MILITARY
ACTIVITY IN SPACE. SAID STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS YESTER-
DAY IN CONFIRMING THAT U.S. HAD ASKED SOVIETS TO BEGIN
TALKS: "WE DON'T WANT TO SEE ARMS COMPETITION EXTENDED
INTO OUTER SPACE."

3. MARTIN TOLCHIN OF NEW YORK TIMES SAID PRESIDENT
CARTER'S STRONGLY WORDED WARNING TO SOVIET UNION LAST FRI-
DAY RESULTED "AS MUCH FROM DICTATES OF DOMESTIC AMERICAN
POLITICS AS FROM NEEDS OF INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMACY."
TOLCHIN SAID PRESIDENT, AT WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY, WARNED
THAT SOVIET UNION'S LACK OF RESTRAINT IN ITS MILITARY
PROGRAMS WOULD JEOPARDIZE COOPERATION WITH U.S. AND HAS LED
ADMINISTRATION TO BEGIN INCREASING BOTH CONVENTIONAL AND
NUCLEAR FORCES. "SPEECH WAS INTENDED NOT ONLY WARN RUSSIANS
OF DANGERS TO PEACE THAT WERE POSED BY THEIR BUILDUP, BUT
ALSO TO COUNTER RIGHT-WING CRITICISM OF PANAMA CANAL
TREATIES AND STRATEGIC ARMS TALKS," TOLCHIN REPORTED. HE
QUOTED CARTER AIDE AS SAYING SPEECH WAS INTENDED TO ASSURE
AMERICAN PEOPLE, NO LESS THAN SOVIET LEADERS, OF PRESI-
DENT'S COMMITMENT TO STRONG NATIONAL DEFENSE. CARTER
AIDES, ACCORDING TO TOLCHIN, SAID WHITE HOUSE CONSIDERED
SPEECH CRUCIAL TO SHORING UP DOMESTIC POLITICAL SUPPORT
FOR SOME FOREIGN INITIATIVES, INCLUDING SALT. "WE WANTED
AMERICANS TO UNDERSTAND THAT WE'RE NOT GIVING EVERYTHING
AWAY," SAID WHITE HOUSE SPECIALIST ON NATIONAL SECURITY
MATTERS. "WE'RE NOT GIVING AWAY WORLD."

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4. WASHINGTON POST, IN MARCH 20 EDITORIAL ON WAKE FOREST
SPEECH, SAID "IT IS PAINFULLY OBVIOUS THAT ONE REASON
PRESIDENT WAS OBLIGED TO SPEAK AS HE DID WAS TO ESTABLISH
CREDIBILITY FOR ANY NEW SALT TREATY HE BRINGS BEFORE

SENATE. THAT IS LIKELY TO BE VERY BIG AND ROUGH DOMESTIC BATTLE, AND ODDS AGAINST HIS PREVAILING WILL BE STRONG UNLESS HE CAN OVERCOME DOUBTS THAT HAVE BEEN GENERATED AMONG PARTS OF PUBLIC AND IN CONGRESS BY CERTAIN SEEMING HAPHAZARDNESS OF HIS APPROACH. IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT HE ALSO NEEDS TO BRING BACK GENUINELY WORTHY TREATY, AND

THAT IS ONE OF THINGS HE SEEMED TO BE TELLING RUSSIANS IN HIS WINSTON SALEM SPEECH: IT SET OUT SOME VERY TIGHT AND TOUGH STANDARDS FOR SALT AGREEMENT. WERE THEY TOO RIGID? WE DON'T KNOW. THEY WERE COUCHED IN LANGUAGE SUSCEPTIBLE OF BROAD RANGE OF INTERPRETATION. BUT WE DO KNOW THAT SOME STIFFENING ALONG LINES OF WINSTON SALEM WAS NEEDED."

5. EDWARD WALSH OF WASHINGTON POST OBSERVED MARCH 19 THAT ONE OF MOST DIFFICULT PROBLEMS STILL FACING CARTER IS NEGOTIATING AND GAINING SENATE APPROVAL OF SALT TWO TREATY. "VIEWED FROM PERSPECTIVE OF FUTURE STRUGGLE IN SENATE OVER SALT TWO ACCORD, WHITE HOUSE'S EXPERIENCE WITH CANAL TREATY, ACCORDING TO ONE VIEW, IS NOT ALL REASSURING," WALSH SAID. WALSH QUOTED ONE SOURCE AS SAYING WHITE HOUSE "PULLED OUT ALL STOPS" ON CANAL TREATY, YET IN END, PRESIDENT WAS FORCED TO ACCEPT AMENDMENTS TO CANAL TREATY-- "KIND OF AMENDMENTS," WALSH NOTED, "SOVIETS WOULD NOT TOLERATE IN SALT ACCORD." WALSH SAID SALT WILL BE "FAR TOUGHER AND CONFRONTS WHITE HOUSE WITH AN ESSENTIALLY DIFFERENT POLITICAL SITUATION THAN DID CANAL TREATIES." WHITE HOUSE, HE EXPLAINED, WAS ABLE TO CAPITALIZE ON PUBLIC OPINION POLLS SHOWING SENTIMENT FLOWING TOWARD APPROVAL OF CANAL TREATIES. BUT, AS HAMILTON JORDAN NOTED TO REPORTERS AFTER PANAMA VOTE, WALSH CONTINUED, "WHEN IT COMES TO THREAT OF NUCLEAR WAR AND HOPE FOR AN END TO ARMS RACE, UNCLASSIFIED

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PUBLIC OPINION IS NOT MAIN PROBLEM. THERE REMAINS STRONG SENTIMENT IN COUNTRY FOR DETENTE WITH SOVIETS. PROBLEM WILL BE IN SENATE, WHERE TECHNICAL DETAILS OF SALT TWO AGREEMENT WILL BE SUBJECTED TO SEARCHING AND SKEPTICAL EXAMINATION."

6. KEVIN KLOSE, REPORTING FROM MOSCOW IN MARCH 19 WASHINGTON POST, OBSERVED THAT TASS "WAS UNUSUALLY FAST IN ISSUING COMMENTARY" ON CARTER'S SPEECH AT WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY IN WINSTON SALEM. TASS SAID PRESIDENT'S SPEECH "ACTUALLY MEANS SHIFT OF EMPHASIS IN AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY FROM EARLIER PROCLAIMED COURSE TOWARD ENSURING NATIONAL SECURITY OF U.S. THROUGH NEGOTIATIONS, THROUGH LIMITING ARMS RACE AND DEEPENING DETENTE TO COURSE OF THREATS AND BUILDUP OF TENSION." TASS SAID PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS ATTEMPTED TO "JUSTIFY" NEW WEAPONS PROGRAMS BY ALLEGING "SOVIET MILITARY THREAT AND ALLEGED ALSO THAT USSR INTERFERES IN LOCAL CONFLICTS."

7. CHARLES CORDDRY OF BALTIMORE SUN REPORTED FROM WASHINGTON MARCH 20 THAT U.S. "IS MOUNTING AN INTENSIVE EFFORT TO GET PRODUCTION OF NEUTRON WEAPONS APPROVED BY AFFECTED EUROPEAN ALLIES IN ADVANCE OF NATO SUMMIT MEETING HERE MAY 30-31. "JUST AS CLEARLY, GOVERNMENT WANTS CONTRO-

VERSIAL AND EMOTIONAL ISSUE SETTLED BEFORE U.N. GENERAL ASSEMBLY STARTS ITS SPECIAL SESSION ON DISARMAMENT MAY 23. CORDDRY SAID NATO PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES ARE TO MEET THIS WEEK TO DISCUSS NEUTRON WARHEAD ISSUE, AND DEFENSE SECRETARY BROWN IS EXPECTED TO VISIT DEFENSE MINISTERS IN BONN AND LONDON BEFORE ATTENDING NATO NUCLEAR PLANNING GROUP CONFERENCE IN DENMARK APRIL 18-19. THERE ALSO WILL BE MEETING OF TREATY DEFENSE MINISTERS MAY 18-19. HE
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QUOTED BROWN AS SAYING SOME OF THESE CONFERENCES COULD PROVE TO BE DECISION POINTS. VANCE

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